

Concept Paper

Regional Councils

One of the seven preparedness priorities for the US as well as Kansas is Regionalization. This concept paper is intended to stimulate discussion and feedback from local and state government and organizations with a stake in Homeland Security preparedness.

Draft Concept: As Kansas looks to further regionalize its funding, planning, preparedness, response, and mitigation efforts; one of the key components will be the development of some form of Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs). Each RCC will serve as the conduit to the state and local entities that they will be working with on a regular basis. Admittedly this transition and development of the Councils will involve significant change and require patience and understanding from all involved parties. It will also be a time of opportunity, and will benefit all involved as we better enable the Regions, and their constituent jurisdictions, to have a clearer voice in the processes that involve them.

With these things in mind, the following Regional Coordinating Council composition is being considered. This is a general outline, a broad picture of how the RCCs will be constituted, and by whom. By starting at this level we can assure that all are in agreement with how the Councils will work, and their basic set-up

The first question that had to be answered was that of whether the RCCs should be 'big' or 'small'. In actuality, something in the middle seems to be a more workable solution for the State of Kansas. After having studied regionalization programs from Georgia, Iowa, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Indiana, and other states; and having had the opportunity to visit some of these jurisdictions and talk with first responders who are Council members there; an idea of what worked well and what needed improvement became clear.

Composition

- Each RCC will be composed of a minimum of nine (9) members, representing the following disciplines: Fire Service, Emergency Medical Service, Law Enforcement, Public Health, Public Works, Emergency Management, Elected Officials (including representatives of both cities and counties), Healthcare, and an At-Large Member.
- RCC membership will be determined through implementation of the following process:
 - Each Homeland Security Region will be divided into districts comprised of two contiguous counties, or three if an odd number of counties constitute a region. Each district, through its Local Emergency Planning

Committee (LEPC), will designate one council member, on a rotational basis, each year.

- (Ex: In year one, District 1 will choose the Fire Service member of the RCC. In year 2, District 1 will choose the Emergency Medical Service member of the RCC. This rotation would continue until the tenth year when District 1 would, once again, choose the Fire Service member of the RCC.)
- Those Regions with fewer than 18 counties, and thus fewer than 9 districts, would still have a RCC of nine members, but their Districts would have to rotate the remaining memberships between them, on an annual basis.
 - (Ex: In a twelve county region, there would be six districts. Those six districts would choose their six RCC members. Additionally, in year 1, districts one, two, and three would choose a second RCC member, of a specified discipline, from their district. Those three members would be added to the initial six, making up the nine member RCC.)
- Those Regions with more than 18 counties, and more than nine districts, would still have those additional districts represented, by adding additional At-Large members to the RCC.
 - (Ex: In the NE Region, with twenty three counties, there would be eleven districts (10 with two counties, and one with three). The RCC in that Region would have eleven members, the base nine, plus two additional At-Large members.)
- The KC Metro Region would have each county serve as its own district and each district would choose three RCC members, per year, on a rotational basis.
- RCC members will stay on, for a second year. During that second year they will continue to attend meetings and serve as the Subject Matter Expert panel for the current RCC. They will also be charged with assessing the Regions' exercise and training needs. (Logic: By keeping the previous year's Council on as SMEs, their knowledge and experience from their time of service on the RCC will not be lost. This will add continuity to the RCCs and will serve to increase their knowledge base.

Interaction

- The RCCs will meet on a bi-monthly basis (Ex. January, March, May, July, September, and November). All Councils will meet within a two to three week

span, so that matters of common interest can be discussed in a timely manner and proper action taken.

- There will always be an odd number of members on an RCC. The RCC will elect a chairperson, and a secretary, at their first meeting of the year. The Chair will be a non-voting position, and will be the tie breaking vote during an impasse.
- Persons who are employed by a State or Federal agency may not be members of a RCC. (Ex: A Volunteer Fire Department Chief, who's primary employment is with KDOT, would not be eligible to serve on the RCC)
- County Emergency Managers, or their designee, will act as the conduits for interaction between their counties and the RCCs. All official communication between the RCCs and the individual counties will be through the County Emergency Managers.
- Individual First Responders and all Public Service Agencies from the Regions will be given a standing invitation to attend Council meetings. They will be given a regular place on the agenda to discuss any issues that they might have with the Councils.
- Professional associations (KEMA, KALHD, KPOA, etc.), State agencies (KDEM, KHP, KDHE, KDOT, etc.), private industry, schools, VOAD groups (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.); other organizations such as the Hospital Regions, Public Health Bio-Terrorism Regions, and any other organization that might have business with the RCC will be given a standing invitation to the Councils' meetings, and a regular place on the agenda so that they may broach their issues.